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General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Friday, 13 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/57/390/Add.1)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/57/390/Add.1.

In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/57/390, Mauritania has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Address by Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kučan (*spoke in Slovenian; English text provided by the delegation*): It was 10 years ago, immediately following the admission of newborn Slovenia to the United Nations, that I addressed the Assembly for the first time. I did so with great pride, with faith in the United Nations and with gratitude for the chance given to my country to present to the international community its own views on current world affairs, with a sense of responsibility for its actions not only towards its own citizens, but also towards the entire international democratic community.

Looking back at the past decade, I can say without the slightest reservation that, without the United Nations, life on our planet would be even more uncertain, social injustice would be even more widespread and global disparities in prosperity even more marked. There would be even more systematic violations of human rights in many States and even more wars.

In spite of its acknowledged weaknesses and inefficiencies, this world Organization has done great work. I daresay that, throughout its membership, Slovenia, too, has contributed to this through its own active pursuit of the principles of the United Nations. It received widespread recognition for the work it accomplished as a non-permanent member of the Security Council; this is something of which we are particularly proud.

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The United Nations decisions at the historic Millennium Summit have already placed the Organization in the future realm of our global world. The violence committed by States against their own peoples is now faced with a new force: the ethic of the democratic world. This ethic does not recognize absolute State sovereignty or absolute non-interference in internal affairs when systematic mass violations of human rights, through State terror, occur.

The principle of humanitarian intervention is the beginning of an important process of implementing global ethics in the governance of this globalized and increasingly interdependent world. It is also a clear message to the authors of international law and to international judicial institutions. It is one of the pillars of the next phase of international law, as is the International Criminal Court. No one any longer has responsibility only towards themselves. State sovereignty is no longer untouchable. Everyone, in their actions, also has a responsibility towards global society, for in an increasingly integrated world, the actions of one easily affect others.

Certain measures of the global community of States in response to the challenges of the twenty-first century, such as the special session on the future of children, the World Summit Sustainable Development and the forthcoming meetings on a better future for Africa are signs that the United Nations is gaining in political and moral clout as an Organization common to all States and as an organization capable of finding the strength to carry out the announced internal reforms.

In that context, Slovenia supports the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Secretary-General's proposed reforms. That these efforts are urgently needed became particularly apparent last year on 11 September, a day of tragedy not only for New York, Washington and the United States in general, but for all humanity. The entire democratic world joined in the fight against international terrorism. Slovenia also did so with great resolve. No one who cared for humanity just stood aside.

But as time passed, it became increasingly clear that even the best military weaponry of the anti-terrorist coalition could not reach down to the social roots of this horrendous evil. This evil is craftily taking advantage of the apathy and the anger of people and States without a future. This evil is trying to regain its strength by playing on religious, cultural and civilizational differences, intertwined with the great social rifts in our global world. Evil, understood in this way — an evil that threatens to use the most atrocious weapons of mass destruction — can be eradicated only through concerted action by democratic States under the umbrella of the United Nations.

It is precisely in this context that the authority and credibility of the United Nations are on trial. The Organization has proven itself capable of reaching common positions and decisions even on the most demanding issues. We are capable of defining common positions, even concerning the actions of those who do not respect these common decisions. The United Nations now must have the ability not only to speak of those positions, but also to implement them through concerted action. That is the responsibility that all of us face today.

Globalization, with all of its positive and negative aspects, is a given fact. Let us do more to transform that fact into something that is in keeping with the needs of the people and the rule of individual and collective human rights. Certainly, this cannot be achieved by trying to drive peoples, States, cultures, religions and civilizations away from their own identities, by trying to place them under the common denominator of a single global identity. That would signify the collapse of our human world, bearing disastrous consequences. Today's world, where borders between States — and particularly between civilizations — are growing less rigid, is a world full of plural identities and of clearly defined national, cultural and religious entities that are beginning to open up to one another.

This plurality calls for a unique integrating factor. That factor can only be a global ethic based on the ancient principle of reciprocity among human beings: do unto others as you would have others do unto you. In times of interdependence among each and every one of us, such values are particularly important. The global ethic should be developed based on this value, for it is a value with deep roots in the world's age-old great religions and civilizations. Based on this value, we will be able to strengthen universal human rights and global social justice, and without that justice, one cannot expect the world to be a safe and peaceful place offering people justified hope that our planet belongs to all of humanity.

International terrorism has unveiled the negative aspects of interdependence among our societies. We must now do more to strengthen the positive aspects and to create new ones. The environmental, economic and ethical challenges humanity is facing today require a radical rethinking of global governance and the establishment of global responsibility. This is so much more so since we are faced with the breakdown of regulation and control in global trade, with an inequitable global development machinery that generates misery and humiliation, and that manifests a relentless preference for economic and financial logic over ecological, social and human demands. A positive alternative must be found to these negative aspects of our interdependence.

Present generations of statesmen, politicians, academicians and civil society all have a duty to lay the foundations of a global ethic and a United Nations that offers stronger guarantees for a world that is no longer so fiercely divided into peoples, nations and States with the right to a future and those who are robbed of that future by the technological and social gaps of our planet.

I am convinced that there will be a kinder future for our world and a more creative future for the United Nations. It is with this in mind that I most warmly welcome our new Member, Switzerland, and soon also, Timor-Leste. These two new Members illustrate very clearly all the disparities in our globalized world. I firmly believe that their work in this Assembly will help transform the United Nations into a community for the entire world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kufuor: A year ago the entire world watched in horror as terror was visited on the city that plays host to the United Nations. It is a city that has welcomed people from all corners of the world for hundreds of years and that still remains for many an irresistible magnet as a place of opportunity.

We watched — all of us, from our different parts of the world — as the terrible events unfolded. If there had been any doubt before, that experience convinced all of us that our world had indeed become a global village. Modern technology enabled all of us simultaneously to watch the events as they unfolded. The devastation and drama of those events have since forcefully brought grief to our individual hearts, across continents, races, religions and political ideologies. If ever there was any doubt about mankind's shared humanity, that catastrophe conclusively dispelled it.

A year on, we still bear the deep scars; we have not forgotten, and we dare not forget, because what happened was not directed exclusively against New York and the people of the United States. Nationals of many countries, including Ghanaians, perished in that tragedy. What happened was indeed an affront to civilization itself.

Throughout the ages, whenever humanity has found itself confronted with great danger, it is the sense of unity and common purpose that has pulled us through. This is no exception. Indeed, the resilience of New York and of the people of the United States has brought about a spirit of solidarity and generosity that is just as awesome to behold as the tragic event itself.

It is for that reason that I am optimistic about the future. The work of the United Nations and of non-governmental organizations, and the growing acceptance of the principles of good governance, human rights, tolerance for a diversity of views and the rule of law around the globe make me optimistic. In my mind's eye, I can already see, in the near future, a world in which there is more openness, more forbearance and less categorization of mankind.

Our nations have been brought together by science, technology and conscience, as well as by

adversity, and the acknowledgement of interdependence among peoples has become a reality. Now we are moving from the concept of "beggar thy neighbour" to one of "prosper thy neighbour", which should become the hallmark of the global village.

Sadly, the continent of Africa still lags behind in many spheres, as poverty and disease plague the continent. But there is a new spirit abroad among the African countries. Africa has never wanted to be perceived as the "scar on the conscience of the world". We do not want to be the object of pity and charity, and we do not want to provide the grisly images of war, disease, ignorance, famine and poverty for the world's television screens. It was largely as a result of our determination to shed that unacceptable image that many a country on the continent, on attaining independence, desperately rushed into one or another untried ideology or economic model that tended only to worsen the woes of self-doubt left by exploitative and unconscionable colonialism.

Today, under the auspices of the African Union, the rejuvenated continental grouping, our countries have resolved to tackle the continent's problems to enable us join the mainstream of world development. We have pledged to endeavour to be honest with each other, and under the Peer Review Mechanism there will be no hiding behind claims of sovereignty in order to tolerate abuses of human rights in individual countries.

We are determined to strive for democracy and good governance, not because those are fashionable buzzwords but because we are convinced that they are the surest — if not always the most rapid — path to the development that we require to uplift the conditions of life of our peoples.

The technology exists and the human expertise abounds in the world to end the degrading poverty and debilitating diseases that sap the confidence of the peoples of Africa. This world Assembly must rally to help Africa in its genuine efforts to tap into the intellectual, financial and moral resources of the globe, to be a worthy partner within it. The concept of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) provides the framework within which African countries can be assisted to become part of the mainstream. It provides a great opportunity for world leaders to move from rhetoric to purposeful action.

Education has served as a route out of poverty for people throughout the ages, and it should be the way out for us in Africa as well. We have an essentially young population that is ready and anxious to learn. Fortunately, information and communications technology provides the means to help Africa leap-frog into the modern world. Let the world community therefore assist Africa to join in the mastery of this powerful tool.

Ours is a well-endowed continent. Our raw materials keep the manufacturing engines of the world running. The reasons for investing in Africa, therefore, need not be charitable; investment can be based on sound economic considerations. The market potential of a thriving and economically viable Africa will do wonders not only for Africa but also for the world economy at large.

I am optimistic, because I think of what Ghana and the African continent have contributed to the development of the world. We have provided, and continue to provide, personnel in various fields to all kinds of institutions in the world. Ghanaian academics and citizens from many other African countries can be found in many top universities and companies around the world, contributing significantly to the development of cutting-edge enterprises. Africans are in various jobs and are making a considerable contribution to the running of organizations, including the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to express Ghana's — and Africa's — deepest gratitude to the international community for the confidence it showed in re-electing Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, to a second term.

In all these endeavours, however, the missing link for Africa has been the solid and sustainable framework for good governance to support the purposeful evolution of prosperous and stable nations on the continent. It is for this reason that Ghana, like other African nations, is trying to put its house in order to take advantage of emerging prospects. We are nurturing our infant democracy, and the citizens are passionately committed to the defence of the Constitution. We are putting in place mechanisms to support good governance. The institutional framework is being created to ensure an efficient public sector that can interface effectively with an enterprising private sector to create wealth and eliminate poverty.

But Ghana, like other developing countries, cannot alone achieve the dramatic rate of growth that is required; there must be significant injections of outside

investment into our economy. We need affordable and sustainable sources of energy to be able to achieve rapid development. We need the partnership, markets and support of the international community to sustain our development. That is the message of NEPAD. We are working to develop a positive economic environment to receive and integrate foreign direct investment as a tool for regional development. That is the sure path for Africa to connect effectively with the global markets.

Ghana acknowledges its share of responsibility to protect the resources that Nature has given our country as the heritage of all humankind. The world cannot and must not operate on the basis of the survival of the fittest. Weaknesses caused by history and other factors must be taken into account and, above all, our common humanity must inform all our international dealings.

Ghana sees a lot of potential in globalization. We wish to recommend, however, that an organization such as the United Nations should provide the regulatory framework to ensure that the benefits of globalization are more equitably distributed. The opportunities are enormous for those who can take advantage of the move to more liberalized markets and increased flows of investment capital. But nature did not make all people equally competitive. That global organization must, therefore, evolve systems of safety nets to guarantee all humanity an acceptable minimum degree of dignity and respectability. The United Nations must rise up to this challenge.

For the pure and proper development of the global village, certain initiatives by this Organization must be commended and encouraged. Ghana is in full support of United Nations effort to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We urge Member States to join in the early implementation of the Programme of Action that was adopted in 2001 to stop this trade, from which most of the instability in Africa stems.

Secondly, women and children need our protection. It is for that very reason that in Ghana we have created a Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs to enable us tackle issues that affect those two groups. We have embarked on a vibrant educational campaign and are pursuing policy initiatives that will create awareness and reduce the incidence of discrimination against women and help improve their livelihoods. We are also striving to ban child labour and enforce free and compulsory education for all children up to the junior secondary school level as enjoined by Ghana's national Constitution.

Thirdly, I must mention the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is threatening the survival of our countries. The spread of the disease is compounding our difficulties even further. I wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his interest, and for the setting up of the Global Fund to help us fight the menace. The Ghana AIDS Commission is constantly seeking new ways to change attitudes at all levels towards the disease, and we seek to learn from the experience of others in combating it. We support the efforts of the international community to provide more affordable antiretroviral drugs for the most needy.

At this stage, permit me to congratulate Switzerland on its accession to membership, and East Timor on its forthcoming accession. That Switzerland has at long last joined the Organization confirms its universality. They are welcome.

The tragedy of 11 September has certainly made a difference to the world. It has shocked the world into uniting to condemn it. Let those of us who have accepted the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of our peoples determine that we must strive for a world of greater tolerance and of more justice, a more humane world in which law and order are fully respected both within nations and in the international community. Eleven September must be used to underpin the vital communal spirit that must motivate the global village. We would then be able to say that we had left the world a better place than we found it.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Ghana for the statement he has just made.

Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Buyoya (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Let me first of all, Sir, discharge a pleasant duty on behalf of my delegation and on my own account, and extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. You may rest assured of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Burundi towards the success of your difficult and important mission. I also pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the able manner in which he led the work of the fifty-sixth session.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the United Nations, and to pay tribute to its Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his support to the people of Burundi.

Nor can I fail to thank the Security Council for its tireless efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi. Through its two visits to Burundi, the latest on 5 and 6 May 2002, the Security Council has shown its solidarity with the people of Burundi in its quest for peace.

During my address, I shall inform the Assembly of the political situation in Burundi, and of how far we have come in the peace process; I will then go on to speak of the challenges we still face and will conclude my statement with some comments on international issues.

Following the establishment of transitional institutions beginning 1 November 2001, the political climate in Burundi has greatly improved. The political forces that had taken part in the Arusha negotiations and signed the Peace Agreement now form the institutions of the Republic: the Government, the National Assembly and the transitional Senate.

Advocating dialogue in an armed conflict is not always an easy task, but a sense of responsibility gives us no alternative. We are pleased to recall from this rostrum that we have chosen the option of peace through dialogue and the procrastinations of others involved in no way shake our conviction.

Since we are on the right path, we request the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the African Union and the countries of our subregion to maintain their support for our quest for peace by assisting the mediation activities — led by Nelson Mandela, assisted by Presidents El Hadj Omar Bongo and Benjamin Mkapa and Vice-President Jacob Zuma — in order to persuade the protagonists to sign a ceasefire agreement without further delay. Indeed, certain provisions of the Arusha Agreement are not being applied precisely because of the ongoing violence. That is why the negotiation and signing of a ceasefire is a crucial stage in hastening and ensuring the success of the many reforms to be undertaken.

The task ahead is enormous, but it can be accomplished. The smooth functioning of institutions is a guarantee of success, while daily experience demonstrates the serious commitment of the political partners and is the basis of our optimism.

While it is true that there are reasons for hope, it is equally true that the challenges to the peace process are genuine and could compromise our path to peace if they are not satisfactorily met in the short term. The violence which the rebels continue to force on the Burundian people is a major challenge not only to us, but to the United Nations, whose primary mission is to maintain peace throughout the world.

We take this solemn opportunity to reiterate our request to the entire international community to compel the Burundian rebels to renounce violence. If diplomacy does not succeed, all other means must be used in order to prevent this rebellion from taking hostage a peace process being led today by a Government formed on the basis of negotiations and which now enjoys international legitimacy. Peace will come to the Great Lakes region when every country there is living in peace. To that end, the effort must be both individual and collective. That is why my country is prepared to continue making its contribution to creating a better climate with all neighbouring countries.

The second major challenge is the reconstruction effort. After nine years of crisis, the Burundian economy has been sorely tried. The population has become further impoverished, all economic parameters have been destabilized, and our external indebtedness prevents us from resorting, as we have done in the past, to the international financial marketplace. Here again,

we ask our traditional partners to give substantial support to our peace efforts. Promises have been made that we hope will be kept in the near future. Indeed, the repatriation of refugees, the resettlement of displaced persons and the rebuilding of damaged infrastructure will require substantial financial resources.

As members of the human community, Burundians are also following the concerns of the world, which, sadly, are many and to which we are constantly seeking solutions. To cite but a few, Burundi welcomes the creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS and, like other countries that have been deeply affected by the pandemic, has requested that access to affordable medicine be improved until such time as researchers are able to develop a vaccine against this scourge, which threatens all humankind, especially in Africa. In the same vein, my delegation supports the idea of creating a world fund to fight poverty and also welcomes the proposal to establish a world fund for the environment.

Even closer to home, our peoples await the concrete results of the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, at which the community of nations reaffirmed the need to work together towards equitable and viable development for current and future generations. We also welcome the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. This testifies to the unequivocal commitment of the United Nations to enhancing and focusing efforts on behalf of the most vulnerable groups of countries.

On the African continent, the New Partnership for Africa's Development is a major source of hope and, as such, deserves the support of the international financial institutions and of the community of donors.

Along with the poverty that is affecting millions of human beings, another fearful danger is that of terrorism. A year after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, the world remains in a state of shock and is seeking ways to stem the scourge of international terrorism. To that end, Burundi is committed to implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which provides the blueprint for a collective fight against terrorism.

The great challenges of poverty, environmental degradation, international terrorism, armed conflict and incurable disease require all nations, rich and poor, to recognize international solidarity as the necessary means of survival for us all. The United Nations is therefore called on to meet this challenge, especially by carrying out the necessary reform of its organs — the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — in order to make them more complementary and effective in the interest of all.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Burundi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Uribe (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I greet you, Your Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic, President of the General Assembly, which I address for the first time.

A short distance from here, on the fateful day 11 September, 2,801 citizens of the world died. In Colombia, violence claims the same number of victims every month. Forty three million Colombians, peace-loving people, are experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Every year Colombia buries 34,000 of its own, victims of violence. We have lost 10 per cent of our youth. Last year the country registered the highest homicide rate in the world: 63 per 100,000 inhabitants.

During the past five years, we have experienced 8,000 acts of collective destruction, more than those recorded for any other cases of violence in the world; 280 villages were the object of guerrilla and

paramilitary attacks with serious consequences for local civilians and the armed forces. The terrorist attack carried out during my inaugural ceremony killed 21 ordinary people. Two million people, 40 per cent of them children, have been forcibly displaced under pressure from violent groups. That is the equivalent of the simultaneous displacement of the communities of Washington and Manhattan. During the past five years, 16,500 people have been kidnap victims. Yesterday, six children were kidnapped and one of them is still being held.

Just as the 11 September terrorist attacks moved the entire world and triggered justified and universal condemnation, mankind should be shaken by attacks such as the one carried out by guerrillas on 2 May 2002, in Bojayá, a village of 1,000 inhabitants. They killed 117 civilians who had taken refuge in the church.

Such violence makes our people poorer every day, discourages investments, hampers economic growth, diverts valuable resources and prevents us from overcoming our economic and social backwardness. Violence absorbs four per cent of my country's gross domestic product. Hijackings, kidnappings and assaults are daily occurrences on our main highways, including the one that joins our two largest cities. Imagine a similar situation between Brussels and Paris, or New York and Boston.

Today, Colombians are making a great effort to address the problem with public order policies, State reform aimed at defeating corruption and political chicanery and greater economic growth and social investment. The main objective of our democratic security policy is to restore the rule of law. Security is not for persecuting real or imagined ideological enemies or maintaining a one-party regime. The aim of democratic security is to protect all citizens in a pluralist nation, open to fraternal and creative debate.

Democratic security is for all Colombians and is intended to ensure that peasant farmers are not driven from their land; that members of the business community are not kidnapped; that journalists are not threatened; and that the missions of bishops, priests, nuns, preachers and educators are respected. It is also intended to ensure that union leaders can freely exercise their actions; political leaders can move about without fear; and that human rights advocates can work without threats.

As civilian commander-in-chief of the arm forces, I am committed to rigorously observing a respecting human rights. Failure in this regard m lead to appeasement, but it would never bri reconciliation. Our emergency measures do not restr human rights, but rather demand the observance rules, for example with regard to the mobilization citizens, in the name of freedom of movement, prevent explosives from continuing to be transported assassinate people.

We respect debate. The security policy that being implemented is not aimed at silencing criticis but rather at confronting violence. That policy irreversible.

The number of military and police personnel Colombia is low: 3.9 per 1,000 inhabitants. New Yo has 42,000 police officers, while all of Colombia h 75,000. We must strengthen our armed forces. We ha decreed a wealth tax that will be paid by high-incor businesses and citizens. The additional tax reven should amount approximately to 1 per cent of the gro domestic product.

As part of the implementation of the democra security policy, our Government has called on t solidarity of a million citizens to cooperate voluntari with the armed forces and justice officials. An essent element of a socially oriented constitutional State citizen support for its legitimate institutions. constitutes the individual's commitment to t community, without which the State loses its soc nature. We must break citizen fear of the guerrillas a paramilitaries, and we must create community-bas links with democratic institutions. To a large extent, t efficacy and transparency of the armed forces depe on citizen cooperation.

The Colombian problem jeopardizes t democratic stability of the region. We need the world assistance to resolve it. I ask for the world's he because my Government has made the decision defeat terror and to ensure that these four years do n end in a renewed victory for crime or in new eviden of State and societal vacillation before the arrogance the violent.

It is imperative that the sources of terr financing be eliminated. That is why we must conqu drugs and kidnapping.

There is concern about weapons of mass destruction within the United Nations, and we share that anguish. But we must understand that drugs have a massive capacity for destruction, equivalent to that of the most feared chemical weapons.

We are determined to eliminate them. We request the same level of commitment from the world. We cannot continue with timid half-actions and decisions.

Miss Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

While we delay action, more drugs are produced and traded by terrorism. I call on fellow members: do not send us your weapons. Eliminate your markets for drugs and chemical precursors. Help us with aerial interdiction and drug seizures in the Pacific and in the Caribbean. We need resources to pay our farmers to destroy drugs and work to restore our forests.

Last week, Carlos Enrique Arenas, a 29-year-old pilot serving with the Colombian navy — father of a 2-year-old daughter and a second child on the way — and his co-pilot, Roberto Enrique Guardo — the father of three young children — disappeared in the ocean. The helicopter they were piloting crashed after intercepting a speedboat carrying more than two tons of cocaine. Sacrifices such as this demand the support of all nations to defeat drugs, especially since until now we have only managed to seize 20 per cent of the drugs that are shipped from our country.

A United Nations resolution — Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) — orders the seizure of bank accounts, investments and other assets of individuals who commit terrorist acts. That resolution has remained a dead letter in those countries where the resources that finance terrorist acts in Colombia circulate.

My Administration's commitment to security is not opposed to dialogue. Quite the contrary, we want dialogue. This is why we have requested the good offices of the United Nations through a special adviser of the Secretary-General. That is the way to begin a serious peace process, one that starts with the cessation of violence.

The United Nations Charter tells us that dialogue with those who commit acts of terror is possible only if those acts are halted. The pain of thousands of Colombians caused by the kidnapping of their loved ones — the list includes former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt; several members of Congress; members of state assemblies; the Governor of my own state, a former minister and tireless worker for peace; members of the armed forces, and hundreds of ordinary people — demonstrates that we need humanitarian action that does not fuel violence but that leads us along the path of reconciliation.

The world has plenty of analysts of Colombian problems, and plenty of critics of our society and our successive Governments. We need less rhetoric and more action — that is, real contributions to solving the problem. We call for effective cooperation, because the violence is financed through the international drug trade and is waged with weapons not made in Colombia.

Like other nations, we suffer dire poverty, injustice, low investor confidence, high debt and a budget deficit. We have always honoured and will continue always to honour our international financial commitments. We are making unprecedented efforts to freeze operating expenditures and to increase taxes. But we need significant bilateral and multilateral economic support to invest and to expand employment — to begin to pay the social debt. A victory over violence will trigger economic growth and create resources for social development, which in turn will consolidate peace.

One thought: the price of a pound of Colombian coffee was once more than $3; it is now around 60 cents. International banks and cooperation agencies should redouble their commitment and resources in Colombia. The money will not to be used for wasteful expenditures or to salvage bankruptcies, but will rather be invested, in the interest of the poor, to ensure governability.

The people of Colombia are proud, hard-working, democratic and sensible; their spontaneity has not been stifled by their suffering. The nation has the most solid democratic tradition, widely recognized long-term economic performance, a highly diversified industrial base, a productive structure increasingly geared towards international markets, and an enormous potential for small democratic enterprises.

Representatives of the peoples of the world: with your commitment and support, and with our own determination, Colombia will be freed from the slavery of violence and will be more prosperous, with greater justice.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Congo

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Nguesso (*spoke in French*): This session of the General Assembly is beginning in a context that is still deeply affected by the memory of the painful events that struck the United States, and especially our host city, just a year ago. So I shall begin by paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the attacks of 11 September 2001. This sacrifice is a cruel reminder of how fragile our world remains, exposed to the most unimaginable threats. Humankind needs solidarity, and the Congolese people reaffirms here, through me, its solidarity with the people of the United States.

The election of Mr. Jan Kavan to preside over the work of the fifty-seventh session is a tribute to his beautiful country, the Czech Republic, and to his reputation as an outstanding statesman whose experience and knowledge will inspire and guide our work.

To Mr. Han Seung-soo, President of the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, we express our earnest thanks for his excellent work. Likewise, we express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, our profound gratitude and our wishes for success in the noble mission that he is brilliantly carrying out at the head of the Organization. Finally, we welcome and congratulate the Swiss Confederation on the occasion of its admission to the Organization. Undoubtedly, that is a major event for the United Nations, which thereby continues to increase its effectiveness.

Two years ago, during the Millennium Summit, held in this Hall, the international expressed its wish to see established throughout the world a climate of peace and security favouring broad prospects for international cooperation, with a view to sustained world development. During that historic meeting, the world's leaders adopted a Declaration whose ambitions were commensurate with the high stakes. In particular, they committed themselves to reducing by half by the year 2015 the proportion of the world's population living in conditions of extreme poverty.

Since the Millennium Summit, the international community has convened a number of meetings whose objective was to improve the lives of our peoples through policies of shared management, of solidarity and of preserving the future in various areas involving the responsibility of our States. We should periodically evaluate our progress, and the current session offers us that opportunity.

The absence of peace — war and insecurity — is gravely undermining humanity. Unfortunately, no region in the world has been spared. Because of irrationality, the Middle East, a veritable powder keg, is unravelling before us. The international community must become further involved in the talks between Palestinian and Israelis in order to put an end to the cycle of violence that has ravaged that part of the world for so long.

Our own subregion, which covers the Economic Community of Central African States — over which we preside — longs for peace and security. Having suffered years of war and instability, Central Africa has only one desire: to emerge quickly from this infernal cycle. In that connection, we should firmly seize every opportunity available to us in order permanently to reverse old trends.

In Angola, the 4 April 2002 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding as an addendum to the Lusaka Protocol offers a glimmer of hope. We welcome the signing of that agreement and, in the same spirit, make an earnest appeal to the international community to give its full support to the populations of those countries faced with dire poverty.

The situation in Burundi remains worrisome despite the formation of a Government of national

unity. We ask the parties to go even further and to begin honest negotiations that could give South African mediation, which we encourage, every chance of success.

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we welcome the peace Agreement of 30 July 2002, signed in Pretoria between the heads of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Rwanda. We also see as a positive development the agreement reached a few days ago in Luanda between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. By the same token, we encourage the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed at concluding an inclusive agreement involving all the sons and daughters of that brotherly country.

In the light of the foregoing, I should like to ask the Assembly to devote all necessary attention to the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. That Committee has just held its 18th ministerial meeting, in Bangui, Central African Republic, and will report to the Assembly during the current session. Its recommendations deserve broad support from the international community. Central Africa needs to regain peace and stability in order to play the major role warranted by its immense potential.

Most of the conflicts that afflict our planet have their roots in the extreme poverty from which populations — especially in developing countries — are suffering. Their poverty is marked by underdevelopment, with all its evil effects, which prevent them from adapting to the new context of the international economy.

It is with the goal of stopping the cycle of dire poverty that Africa has established, along with the new African Union, an original plan for its development: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is Africa's contribution to assisting in its own development. This development choice shares the spirit of the new partnership defined in March 2002 by the Monterrey Consensus and the goals of the Rome World Food Summit and of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Since 15 October 1997, when the transition period in Congo began, my country has been facing major challenges.

The first of these challenges — to conclude the transition and the electoral process — has been met. This political development, in spite of the setbacks and difficulties encountered, has led, thanks to the determination of the Congolese people, to the establishment this year of new democratic institutions following free and fair general elections.

The achievement of that first objective has given us ample opportunity better to take up the other challenges and priorities ahead of us, namely the strengthening of peace and security, the consolidation of national unity and democracy, the promotion of human rights, economic reconstruction, and the revitalization of international cooperation.

Our determination to engage in active and dynamic international cooperation is reflected in particular in our effective participation in Central African activities through the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, of which Congo holds the presidency; in our vision of a common future for the peoples of the subregion; and in our resolute commitment to the Partnership for Africa's Development.

It is with great pleasure and conviction that I convey to the Assembly the optimism and high hopes of the Congo — a State that has reclaimed its place in the community of nations and intends to keep it. It wishes to serve as a genuine haven of peace, well-being, prosperity and modernity for current and future generations.

It is with current and, in particular, future generations in mind that we have resolved, along with five other Central African States, to wage a widespread campaign to preserve forests, animal life and biodiversity in the Congo River Basin.

We welcome the determination of the United States of America, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan and South Africa, as well as that of major international organizations, specialized non-governmental organizations and forestry companies to take an active part in what we call the Congo Basin Initiative.

It is also with the goal of speeding up the implementation of the objectives of sustainable development and of a healthy environment that my

country is committed to acceding, in the coming months, to the Kyoto Protocol.

The Congo hopes to be a State that unreservedly abides by the universal principles and values of human rights, peace, fundamental freedoms and good governance.

There can be no doubt that this vision is shared by all of our States. It is the basis our of Organization, whose principal objective is to work for peace and freedom throughout the world.

The United Nations must tirelessly and resolutely work daily for the triumph of peace and freedom. Let us not forget this. We cannot forget that the United Nations was create to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". It was created essentially for peace.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Congo for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Madagascar.

Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ravalomanana (*spoke in French*): The Madagascar delegation, which I have the honour of leading for the first time at this session of the General Assembly, is delighted to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his well-deserved election to the presidency of this session, and we wish him every success.

To his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, we express our most sincere appreciation for having led the fifty-sixth session to a successful conclusion through dedication and skilful leadership.

The dedication of our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations deserves our full appreciation and gratitude.

The admission of the Swiss Confederation as a new Member of the United Nations is for Madagascar a source of profound satisfaction. This friendly country is a living example of a peaceful and multicultural society based on values of democracy and freedom.

Here today, in the framework of the commemoration of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, we wish to express our solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States. We reiterate our condemnation of such terrorist acts, whose consequences are incalculable. A global phenomenon without borders, terrorism is considered to be the most dangerous enemy of the new millennium. It can be eradicated only through harmonious international cooperation.

In this regard, we wish to pay tribute here to the efforts of the United Nations, acting through the Counter-Terrorism Committee created by the Security Council, for the implementation of Council resolution 1373 (2001), and we commend all other regional initiatives adopted to combat this plague. To fight terrorism, countries such as ours will need special technical assistance in order to implement this resolution of the United Nations, as well as other international treaties.

The persistence of areas of tension and conflict around the world, especially the Middle East, demands the reinvigoration of the United Nations to make it more effective in responding to the needs of the international community, particularly in maintaining international peace and security. To pursue this critical objective, we must now more than ever strengthen our efforts to make the Security Council more democratic, more representative and more transparent.

There is no doubt that the United Nations provides us with the ideal framework for creating conditions that encourage States and peoples to choose peace over war. In this regard, Madagascar wishes to congratulate Timor-Leste on its independence after a valiant and heroic struggle by the people of that

country and successful efforts by the United Nations to re-establish peace there.

Furthermore, Madagascar encourages the mediation efforts undertaken by the United Nations for the settlement of conflicts in a number of countries throughout Africa. In this context, I wish to reiterate the profound gratitude of the Malagasy people for the role the United Nations agreed to play in resolving the post-election dispute that threatened Madagascar. This crisis is now over and Madagascar is now experiencing a new era full of hope.

We are convinced that sustainable development requires the consolidation of the rule of law and the establishment of good governance. Towards this end, the new Government is taking all appropriate measures for the sound and rational management of public finances and of international assistance. Madagascar has given the fight against corruption the very highest priority. We have also taken the initiative to insure that an effective policy is developed and applied in order to tackle this evil on all fronts. Madagascar supports General Assembly resolution 55/61, through which our General Assembly decided to create an ad hoc committee entrusted with negotiating a future legal instrument against corruption. Our country is awaiting the conclusion of such an instrument in the near future, in order to fill the gaps in its own legal system. We look forward with considerable interest to the high-level Conference in Mexico in 2003 for signing a convention against corruption.

The rapid and sustainable development of Madagascar is the major and fundamental objective of the present Government, in order to extract the country from the scourge of poverty, a source of instability that erodes democratic values. In this context, Madagascar is committed to a pro-active policy aimed at recovery for rapid and sustainable growth of its economy, in which the private sector will be the driving force.

As we see it, the key to development is partnership between the public sector and the private sector, in which the Government works together with private companies and non-governmental organizations solely for the benefit of the people. We invite private businesses to invest in Madagascar. The returns on those investments will be beneficial both to them and to the Malagasy people.

As an essential component of development and of peace, education is our priority of priorities. Malagasy children will live fully in the world of the twenty-first century, which is characterized by advanced technology of information and communications. Thus, Madagascar welcomes the adoption of Assembly resolution 56/258 calling for a World Summit on the Information Society to be held in 2003 and in 2005. The world community will then have a unique opportunity to discuss information and develop the opportunities offered by digital technologies, in particular in Africa and in the least developed countries.

The Republic of Madagascar is ready to do everything in its power to put the country back on the path of development. This will be done with the support of the international community in the framework of mutually advantageous cooperation.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude and our appreciation to all of Madagascar's development partners, bilateral, regional and multi-lateral, for their valuable contribution to the re-launching of economic activity in our country.

Faced with multiple challenges in our era, a time dominated by poverty and underdevelopment, international cooperation is no longer a choice; it is an absolute necessity for the survival of humanity. Those factors that diminish us as human beings: poverty, HIV/AIDS, famine and illiteracy, cannot be eliminated without a true spirit of solidarity, guaranteeing a better future for all people. Let us not forget that the preamble of our Charter announces a new humanity with peoples and human beings living in dignity and security. Towards that end, they must have access to fundamental human rights, the right to health care, the right to education and to culture, and the right to a decent income. Our mission, to reduce poverty everywhere in the world, has become today more important and more urgent than ever before.

The slowdown in economic activity, on a global scale, following the attacks of 11 September 2001, has worsened impoverishment and plunged millions of individuals into a state of dire need. In this grim context, globalization could play a vital role in the fight against poverty, as long as the countries of the north and the south are offered the same opportunities of development.

In order for globalization to truly benefit humankind, it must take into consideration the interests

of all countries the world over, in an international economy of sharing.

Global interdependence and better international economic cooperation must be entirely accepted, if we are to obtain the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. A collective awareness to develop a real partnership for development is indispensable in order to make a reality of that objective. In this spirit, Madagascar welcomes the consensus reached at the International Conference On Financing For Development, which was held in Monterrey.

In the same context, Madagascar urges the international community to give firm and concrete support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and to give that support both bilaterally and multilaterally. With the objective of giving an important role to the private sector in development, Madagascar fully and without reserve supports the principles and objectives underlying NEPAD. In the coming months, I intend to make Madagascar one of the leading countries of NEPAD, because I am sincerely committed to good governance, the development of infrastructures and energy, education, new technologies, access to the markets of developed countries and the protection of the environment.

The alarming conclusions of a United Nations Environment Programme report entitled "Africa Environment Outlook", as well as the recent weather-related disasters in Central Europe and Asia, require the international community to develop a new code of ethics for the conservation and effective protection of the environment. Our Government will make the protection of our precious environment one of our main priorities. Furthermore, Madagascar hopes that the Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg a few days ago will give new impetus to our collective determination to offer all countries an opportunity to develop in a way that benefits their inhabitants, their environment and our shared heritage, the Earth.

By some standards, Madagascar is a poor country. However, it is rich in unique natural resources and in educated human resources. Above all, its population is attached to democracy, family values and belief in God.

We would like today to express our desire to cooperate with the United Nations as a partner for the reconstruction of Madagascar. By working in partnership, we will ensure for our country a future of hope. The entire world will come to know us by our strengths, not our weaknesses.

Working together with the United Nations family, Madagascar is ready to make its own contribution to building a global village in which all countries receive equal treatment and have equal opportunities for full development — an indispensable condition for the establishment of lasting peace.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the President of the Republic of Madagascar for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Vajpayee (India) (*spoke in Hindi; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I congratulate Mr. Kavan on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. I also extend my best wishes to Secretary-General Kofi Annan in this first year of his second term in office.

Two days ago, we commemorated the first anniversary of a terrible event that focused the collective global consciousness on international terrorism. Terrorism did not start on 11 September. It was on that day that it brazenly announced itself on the global stage, flaunting its immunity from distance and power.

As a country exposed to the depredations of terrorism for decades, India empathized with the pain of the American people, admired their resilience in coming to terms with the consequences and supported the bold decision to counter-attack terrorism at its very source.

The international community has taken some collective decisions in the global effort to combat terrorism and to choke off its lifelines. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) contains the essence of these decisions. The Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee should now move beyond information compilation and legal assistance to enforcing compliance by States known to be sponsoring, sheltering, funding, arming and training terrorists.

In our South Asian region, nuclear blackmail has emerged over the past few months as a new arrow in the quiver of State-sponsored terrorism. Dark threats were held out that actions by India to stamp out cross-border terrorism could provoke a nuclear war. To succumb to such blatant nuclear terrorism would mean forgetting the bitter lessons of the 11 September tragedy.

As far as India is concerned, we have repeatedly clarified that no one in our country wants a war, conventional or otherwise. Nor are we seeking any territory. But absolutely everyone in India wants an end to the cross-border terrorism which has claimed thousands of innocent lives and denied entire generations their right to a peaceful existence with normal economic and social activity. We are determined to end it with all the means at our command. Let there be no doubt about that in any quarter.

Yesterday we heard the extraordinary claim in this Assembly that the brutal murder of innocent civilians in Jammu and Kashmir is actually a freedom struggle and that the forthcoming elections in that state are a farce, since they cannot be a substitute for a plebiscite demanded over 50 years ago. It requires an effort of acrobatic logic to believe that the carnage among innocents is an instrument for freedom and that elections are a symbol of deception and repression. If the elections are a mere fraud, why are terrorists being trained and infiltrating India at the command of the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan to kill election candidates and to intimidate voters?

If Pakistan claims to be a crucial partner in the international coalition against terrorism, how can it continue to use terrorism as an instrument of State policy against India?

Mr. Nguyen Dy Nien (Viet Nam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

How can the international coalition condone Pakistan-directed killings of thousands of innocent civilians — women and children included — to promote a bizarre version of self-determination? Those who speak of underlying or root causes of terrorism offer alibis to the terrorists and absolve them of responsibility for their heinous actions, such as the 11 September attacks on the United States or the 13 December attack on our Parliament.

Yesterday we heard yet another patently false and self-serving claim that in India Muslims and other minorities are the target of Hindu extremists. With 150 million Muslims, India has the second largest Muslim population in the world; greater than that of Pakistan. We are proud of the multi-religious character of our society. Equal respect for all faiths and non-discrimination on the basis of religion are not just part of our Constitutional obligations, but, as the whole world knows, they are the signature theme of India's civilization and culture.

We have to recognize that the developmental divide between the North and the South is becoming wider and deeper by the day. The challenges that face us are stark, and there is no alternative to having all countries of the world join hands to face them together.

Over the last decade, 10 million people have been joining the ranks of the poor each year. A quarter of the world's population lives in extreme poverty.

We have to find US$ 24 billion annually for investment in poor countries, if we are to achieve the World Food Summit goal of halving hunger by 2015.

The continuation of widespread poverty, at a time when unimaginable wealth is concentrated in a small social layer, is totally unacceptable. The twenty-first century has all the means to end this sad legacy of the past centuries. What is lacking is the political will among the developed countries to sincerely and speedily address the legitimate developmental needs of the developing countries, especially the least developed ones.

Casting an even longer shadow over this grim developmental canvas is global climate change, from which the poor will most suffer, though they contributed least to it. The recent floods and forest fires in Europe are a forewarning that the countries of Asia and Africa are not the only victims of the fury of a degraded environment. The Earth's atmosphere and biosphere know no national boundaries. The choice before the global community is stark: Either we take urgent steps to protect the environment or be prepared for far worse natural calamities.

Early this month, the Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development debated some of the linkages between poverty, trade, environment, national, international and corporate governance and global financial flows. We emerged from the Summit with some encouraging outcomes, but these fell well short of the demands of our time.

It has become a categorical imperative to understand and address man's developmental needs in their totality, and not in isolated parts. It is disconcerting that the highways of development are jammed with the noisy and unruly traffic of materialism and its brash cousin, consumerism. Human values have become mute bystanders in most political, economic and social activities.

The result of this imbalance between our material and non-material needs can never be happy for mankind. On the contrary, if we are guided by compassion, care, feeling for our fellow human beings, cooperation and other human values, we are bound to get the right solutions to every problem on our planet.

Humanity is crying out for a harmonious integration of the economic, social, political, environmental and spiritual dimensions of development. This task calls for the closest possible cooperation among nations and communities, with a readiness to accept the best from every cultural and spiritual tradition around the globe. The United Nations needs to take up newer and bigger initiatives in this direction.

In this Assembly, less than a year ago, and in the United States Congress the year before, I had extended India's offer to coordinate a comprehensive global development dialogue. I reiterate that offer today. If we are to achieve the development goals we have promised ourselves by 2015, we need such a dialogue urgently.

As we come together once again at the United Nations, at a time of new and diverse challenges, we should reflect on our collective commitment to the Charter, its purposes and principles. There is a growing perception, particularly among the weaker and poorer countries, that responses to issues of far-reaching impact often seem arbitrary and contradictory.

A common destiny is at stake. The world needs collective multilateralism. It needs the United Nations, the coming together and working together of all its nations in the development of a common and collective perspective.

Conflicts arise when there is no spirit of democracy within and among nations. A genuinely democratic framework enables us to respect alternative points of view, to value diversity and to fashion solutions responsive to the aspirations of people.

India's own experience as a hugely populated and diverse nation shows how complex problems can be addressed within a constitutional and democratic framework.

These values need to be assiduously nurtured in our societies, so that at least a future generation is rid of the scourge of poverty, intolerance, obscurantism and religious extremism.

Democratic societies are far less prone to ideologies based on violence or militarist yearnings, since they do not have their fingers permanently on the trigger of a gun. We have to be vigilant against threats to democracy worldwide arising from forces that are opposed to it, be they rooted in fundamentalist political ideologies or extremist religious dogmas.

All of us are aware of the challenges. Most of us are agreed that a stable global order has to rest on the four strong pillars of peace, security, sustainable development and democracy. We have to ensure that each of these pillars is strong and resilient.

We are conscious of our collective responsibility. It is the leap from this theoretical understanding to its practical realization that we have often failed to execute. We should not fail again. Our future generations will not forgive us if we do.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan

The Acting President: The Assembly will hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Koizumi (Japan): First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his assumption of the Presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. At the same time, I pay high tribute to Mr. Han Seung-soo, former President of the General Assembly, for his leadership.

I am pleased on this occasion to congratulate Switzerland on becoming a United Nations Member State. My congratulations also go to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which declared its independence on 20 May. Japan heartily supports its admission to the membership of the United Nations.

The Peace Bell in the garden of United Nations Headquarters was presented to the United Nations in 1954 by the Japanese people with a prayer for world peace. It has been rung every year for world peace. The beautiful sound of the bell, which was made from coins collected from all over the world, reminds us of what the United Nations represents.

In order to ensure world peace and prosperity, we need to harmonize a range of efforts which encompass not only military measures, but also initiatives for the solution of poverty problems and the establishment of social infrastructures that will put an end to human rights violations. The United Nations should be a forum where the contributions of each and every State are consolidated and implemented in the most efficient manner. No single State or organization can accomplish this. Only the United Nations is capable of carrying out such a lofty task.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the issue of Iraq, which is of grave concern to the international community. Iraq must comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions. In particular, Iraq must allow immediate and unconditional inspections and dispose of all weapons of mass destruction. It is important for the international community to continue to work together and to engage more strenuously in diplomatic efforts through the United Nations. In doing so, we must pursue the adoption of necessary and appropriate Security Council resolutions as soon as possible.

Terrorism remains a critical issue this year. Today, in addition to terrorism, I would like to take up other major challenges which the United Nations must address and to describe Japan's contributions in those areas, namely, the consolidation of peace and nation-building, the environment and development, and nuclear disarmament. I will also touch upon my ideas for the realization of United Nations reform, which is essential in order for this Organization to tackle these challenges successfully.

The first challenge is the fight against terrorism. Just after the terrorist attacks on 11 September, I visited ground zero. Seeing with my own eyes the magnitude of the destruction, I was speechless at the enormity of the terrorist attack. 11 September is a challenge not only to the United States, but also to all humankind. The prevention and eradication of terrorism are an important task for the United Nations and, indeed, for all Member States.

Japan calls upon all States to accede to international conventions related to terrorism. It is important to develop international norms in this area, such as a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. Safe havens for terrorists cannot be allowed. Japan will further strengthen its domestic counter-terrorism measures. Consulting closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, it will share its knowledge and expertise in counter-terrorism measures with those States that are in need of it. Japan will respond to threats where weapons of mass destruction might be used in acts of terrorism by actively joining the efforts of the international community to prevent the proliferation of these weapons.

The second challenge is the consolidation of peace and nation-building. Japan attaches great importance to extending post-conflict assistance for the consolidation of peace and nation-building to prevent the recurrence of conflicts. Having developed a mechanism to enable it to cooperate effectively in broader areas, Japan has entered a new stage in its cooperation with peacekeeping operations. This positive posture is manifested in its deployment since February of 690 Self-Defence Force personnel, mainly as an engineer group, to the peacekeeping operation in East Timor. Japan will enhance its cooperation in other areas as well, such as demining, rehabilitation of infrastructure, elections and the establishment of systems for internal security.

The President returned to the Chair.

Concerning Afghanistan, at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan held in Tokyo in January, Japan strove to solidify the resolve of the international community. We are now preparing a programme to assist the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, which will give form to our proposed Register for Peace. My country is also contributing to regional reconstruction by developing an assistance project for the resettlement of refugees and displaced people in such areas as Kandahar.

In the Middle East, it is crucial that the vision of the peaceful coexistence of Israel and an independent Palestinian State materialize as early as possible. Japan will assist the reform of the Palestinian Authority, which is aimed at the establishment of a new State by the Palestinian people. We will do so particularly by providing technical assistance for democratization. Elections by the Palestinians are the first step towards nation-building and I believe that the international community should extend assistance to ensure their success. However, putting an end to the vicious circle of violence remains our most urgent task. Japan resolutely condemns terrorist acts by Palestinian extremists and strongly urges Israel to immediately withdraw its troops to the line of September 2000, halt its military operations and lift the economic closures in the autonomous areas.

In Africa, peace and stability are prerequisites for development. We are encouraged by the positive movements in that continent, such as the realization of peace in Angola and a partial ceasefire in Sudan. Japan will actively support the efforts of African States for conflict resolution and the consolidation of peace.

The third challenge is the simultaneous achievement of environmental protection and development. Towards that end, it is of course important to utilize all available financial resources and to develop human resources, which are the engine of nation-building. However, ownership by developing countries and their partnership with the international community, which supports their ownership, are also essential.

In this respect, we welcome the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the establishment of the African Union as manifestations of ownership by African countries. In order to help strengthen both African ownership and the partnership with the international community, and building on the results of the successful World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg, Japan will convene the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) in October 2003. Also, in pursuit of sustainable development, it will host an international ministerial-level conference on water in Kyoto in March 2003. Japan will continue to participate actively in worldwide actions for environmental protection and development by providing expertise and taking concrete action.

Fourthly, I would like to touch upon the nuclear disarmament issue. I believe that Japan, as the only country in human history to have suffered nuclear devastation, has a significant role to play in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan will continue its efforts to realize a peaceful and safe world, free of nuclear weapons, as early as possible. To that end, we will propose a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons" at this session of the General Assembly, and we will redouble our efforts to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

When addressing these challenges, we must ensure that the variety of measures taken by Member States are effectively coordinated. The United Nations must exercise its leadership in this endeavour. We, that is all Member States, must breathe new life into the United Nations by strengthening its functions through reforms. Next year, the debate on Security Council reform will enter its tenth year. I believe that we should

now focus our discussion on such questions as the number of seats on an enlarged Security Council. Japan intends to work hard to that end. In this connection, I would remind all Member States of the question of the "enemy State" clauses, meaningless legacies of the twentieth century, that remain in the United Nations Charter.

Since assuming office as Prime Minister in April 2001, I have proceeded with a series of reforms to enable Japan to respond appropriately to the new era. The United Nations also must continue to reform itself so as to respond to new situations in the world by constantly reviewing its organization and functions. The prescription for reform is already shown in the Millennium Declaration. In order to achieve the goals contained in the Declaration and build a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, every Member State should renew its determination to achieve reform in the United Nations and take actions toward that end. Japan will make its utmost efforts to ensure that the United Nations is able to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Japan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth (Mauritius): It gives me immense pleasure to address the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly under your able leadership. Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you our wholehearted congratulations on your election as the President of the present session. I wish to assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation throughout your tenure of office.

I also wish to convey my thanks to His Excellency Dr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for the remarkable manner in which he conducted the work of the Assembly's fifty-sixth session. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan also deserves our gratitude for his inspiring and commendable initiatives in furthering the objectives of our Organization.

We are happy that the Swiss Confederation and Timor-Leste have joined us as the newest members of the United Nations family. Timor-Leste stands out as a shining accomplishment of the United Nations system to uphold the right to independence of a nation in adverse conditions.

The terrorist atrocities of 11 September will never fade from our collective consciousness, and the agony and the pain of the day are still with us. The sophisticated infrastructure of the terrorist organizations that was utilized to inflict that monstrosity must be dismantled at any cost. We owe it to ourselves and to the generations that will come after us to mobilize all our energies and efforts to never let that happen again, anywhere.

Mauritius is committed to remain fully engaged in the global coalition against terrorism, and we shall continue, together with other States, to take all measures — nationally, regionally and internationally — so that the scourge of terrorism is never inflicted on unsuspecting civilians and countries. We are alive to the chilling reality that no country is or ever will be safe until the war against terrorism is finally and completely won. We condemn cross-border infiltration; it must stop and must be made to stop.

The threats posed by international terrorism have heightened the need for collective action to preserve world peace and security. While we combine our efforts to wage a war on terrorism, we should, at the same time, continue to work towards global disarmament and a complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction within a specified time frame. My delegation reiterates its appeal for the early convening of a conference on nuclear disarmament.

The term of Mauritius as an elected non-permanent member of the Security Council will end in

December this year. During its tenure on the Council, Mauritius was instrumental in the establishment of an ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. It has made positive and constructive recommendations that have been endorsed by the Security Council.

In contrast to previous years, when the General Assembly listened to a litany of horror stories out of Africa, I am happy to note that substantial and positive developments are taking place on the continent. There is a new dawn in Africa and the stark realization that, without enduring peace and stability, there will be no sustainable development.

We congratulate the African leaders who have spared no effort in the search for African solutions to African conflicts and crises. The Pretoria Agreement between Presidents Kabila and Kagame represents a major breakthrough for the peace process in the Great Lakes region. We are aware that the implementation will be difficult. We are, however, confident that the international community will provide all necessary assistance to the leaders in the region for a smooth implementation.

With the positive developments in Angola, the successful general elections in Sierra Leone, the settlement of the boundary problem between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the progress made in the implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, there are clear signals that some of the major conflicts in Africa are being successfully resolved.

As Africa embarks on the road of peace, we wish to underscore the crucial role played by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community in their relentless search for negotiated settlement of the conflicts in our respective subregions. There is cause for optimism, and it is gratifying that the days of doom and gloom for Africa are on their way to extinction.

Our region, the Indian Ocean, which has witnessed some turbulent times recently, is again poised for stability and development. We applaud the return to constitutional rule in the Comoros and the consolidation of democratic institutions in that country. We also welcome the formation of a Government of national reconciliation in Madagascar and the efforts under way to undo the damage caused by the recent crisis there. Mauritius will be closely associated with the countries of our region to further enhance regional cooperation.

The launching of the African Union in Durban, South Africa, in July this year was indeed a historic and emotionally charged occasion. The birth of the African Union heralds a new era of political, economic and social transformation for our continent. The continent is more than ever determined to shape its destiny and to tackle comprehensively the burning problems of poverty, hunger, disease and underdevelopment that have debilitated millions of Africans over the years. The African Union has raised expectations that we, as leaders, are committed to honour. The African Union will be able to respond in a positive manner to the challenges confronting it, as well as maximizing the opportunities for the improvement of the lives of peoples of the continent. In that context, the decision of African countries to take responsibility for peacekeeping on the continent needs to be encouraged. Since the burden of peacekeeping must be equitably shared, I am pleased to announce that Mauritius will contribute to the United Nations civilian police for service in post-conflict operations.

Along with the launching of the African Union, the home-grown New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is another chapter in the unfolding of the success story of the African continent. NEPAD commits Africa to building a strong and enduring culture of democracy, respect for human rights and accountability for the continent. Indeed, the African Peer Review Mechanism is a credible mechanism to promote the prospects of internationally recognized norms and standards of good governance.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) marks a watershed in mankind's quest to put an end to impunity and to bring to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity, for genocide and for international crimes. The ICC is the single most important institution of this millennium, and it is the duty of the international community to fully support it.

In May this year, during the special session on children, Mauritius had the opportunity to join the international efforts to pave the way for effective protection for every child in every part of the world. The children who addressed the gathering uttered words of great significance that no one can, or should, ever forget. The future is theirs, and it is for them that

we ought to ensure the sustainable development of our one and only planet. My country will ensure that the principles, goals and actions discussed during the special session are integrated in our various child welfare programmes.

The Middle East is still not at peace. The death toll rises every day, but we are encouraged by the signals being sent by both the Israelis and the Palestinian leadership. Our vision of the Middle East is to see the early establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel on the basis of agreed and secure boundaries. The Palestinians also need to have State machinery that observes the fundamental norms of a democratic system, with responsibility and accountability on the part of the leaders. They alone have the absolute right to elect their leaders when elections are held in January 2003.

We appeal to the Iraqi authorities to comply fully and unconditionally with Security Council resolutions with respect to allowing the arms inspectors to fulfil their mandate.

Small island developing States are a particularly vulnerable group of countries by virtue of their inherent natural and structural constraints. The World Bank; the Commonwealth; the United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held recently in Johannesburg, South Africa, have all recognized that those constraints, if not addressed effectively, could undermine the trade and development prospects of these countries, leading to their further marginalization. We look forward to specific and concrete recommendations for action in this regard at the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization scheduled to be held next September in Mexico.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development addressed the fundamental question of what kind of world we want for ourselves and for generations that are yet unborn. The recent devastating floods in Europe and Asia, as well as the droughts in many parts of Africa — particularly Southern Africa, where there are more than 13 million people in danger of famine — are a stark reminder of the fragility of our planet's ecosystem. The World Summit on Sustainable Development has made the whole world conscious of the havoc that nature may cause unless drastic measures are taken immediately to redress the ecological imbalance.

(*spoke in French*)

The Ninth Summit of La Francophonie, which Lebanon will host next month and which will be held on the topic "dialogue of cultures", will undoubtedly enable the French-speaking community to foster sharing among various cultures with a view to maintaining peace, security and democracy.

(*spoke in English*)

Mauritius reaffirms its legitimate sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including the island of Diego Garcia, which was detached from the territory of Mauritius by the United Kingdom prior to our independence. We renew our call to the former colonial Power, the United Kingdom, to accelerate discussions with us for an early settlement of this issue. The persons of Mauritian origin who were displaced from the Chagos Archipelago continue to claim redress for the serious human rights violations that they endured. We support their efforts to seek redress.

We also call on the French Government to work towards the resolution of the dispute concerning Tromelin Island, over which Mauritius has sovereignty.

In conclusion, Mauritius reiterates its conviction that the United Nations system remains the best guarantee for international peace and security.

The framework within which the United Nations organizes the collective security of States may not be perfect, but it is at least one that is tested and has served us relatively well for more than 50 years. Working on the basis of the neutrality of rules and principles is far preferable to the haphazardness of expediency. We also should not be unmindful of the linkages which exist between different situations, and that is why we urge the international community to observe the principle of equality of treatment in all cases.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic.

Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Berlusconi (Italy): One year has gone by since the terrorist attack on the United States, which inflicted such deep wounds on the city that welcomes us today. By striking this city, this nation, this democracy, the terrorists intended to strike at the heart of the whole community of nations and peoples that embraces the United Nations and the values for which it stands.

But they failed in their purpose. Instead, their barbarous acts roused in all of us a common will to respond. Rather than divide us, they united us. And united we intend to respond to every new threat to world security.

The fight against terrorism is the crucial challenge we must face today in order to defend human values — the values of freedom, peace, justice and development which we all share.

The United Nations is at the forefront of this struggle. We know that it will be a long and hard battle, and we must therefore maintain the cohesion and determination that we have shown so far.

But we are firmly convinced that this battle can be won. Yesterday President Bush recalled the responsibilities that we all share in this fight to defend freedom, which is the greatest good and that from which all other goods flow. Terrorism finds a breeding ground wherever there is no freedom, wherever there is no democracy, but where there is hunger, misery and despair.

In order to defeat terrorism, we must globalize freedom and democracy. In order to eradicate terrorism, we must promote an economic development without borders — a lasting development for all.

My country has played a role in this struggle from the start and will continue to do so to the end, enhancing the military, financial, judicial, police and intelligence cooperation that has already achieved important results. But we are also working to eradicate poverty and disease. We are committed to pledging 0.39 per cent of our gross domestic product to less developed countries, and we intend to reach the level of 0.7 per cent.

The African continent is crucial to our effort. It is a challenge to our conscience and represents a test of our ability to help its countries to participate in a true development without borders.

The Group of Eight's action plan for Africa, launched in Genoa under Italy's presidency and approved in Canada, responds to the need for a new form of solidarity between the most industrialized countries and those which intend to become the owners of their future.

But an increase in financial aid is no longer enough. At the Kananaskis summit, we presented an action plan aimed at achieving common standards of good governance, starting with our "e-government" initiative, a completely computerized and digitalized universal model of public accounting and of public administration and its primary functions.

The adoption of this universal model, which respects the identity, traditions and culture of each country, could produce several positive effects: clear and transparent public accounting; clear laws and regulations befitting the rule of law; more efficient services for citizens and businesses; greater efficiency in public administration; and, above all, greater democracy. This will spark a virtuous circle, and donor countries will finally have the certainty that their assistance is truly delivered to needy populations.

In this respect, three phases were outlined at the Group of Eight meeting. In the first trial stage, the necessary assistance will be provided to the countries that wish to adopt this system. At the end of this phase, which might last three or four years, we can move on to a second phase in which the adoption of the universal system becomes a requirement for all countries that apply for development assistance.

Finally, there could be a third phase in which we could ask the most industrialized countries to forge a

special partnership with specific countries, taking it upon themselves to implement specific projects.

We are likewise convinced that public assistance should be supplemented by private assistance. At Kananaskis, we submitted an innovative proposal called "de-tax", whereby private citizens would be able to allocate between 1 and 2 per cent of the price of what they buy to the implementation of specific projects, such as schools, hospitals or water-supply facilities in poor countries.

At Genoa we also launched the "Education for All" plan and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which Italy has pledged a substantial contribution.

But the poorer countries also need to be relieved of the burden of their debt so as to free up the resources they need for their growth. That is why Italy has already cancelled $1 billion of debt and will soon cancel another $4 billion, until the complete write-off of all its credits.

Our commitment to the United Nations is clear on all fronts. Italy is the sixth-largest contributor to the Organization's regular budget and one of the largest troop contributors. About 10,000 Italian soldiers are deployed throughout the world, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, to preserve and maintain peace and security. We will continue along that road, in our firm belief that there is no problem that we cannot solve if we are united in our determination.

As we speak today, the main challenge to the United Nations and our system of values is posed by the regime that governs Iraq, which has systematically ignored all the resolutions of the United Nations. A response is indispensable to safeguard the international community from the danger posed by a massive build-up of weapons of mass destruction.

As President Bush so clearly stated, what we must address today is precisely this repeated defiance of the United Nations and of the will of the international community. We must make use of all the diplomatic and political means available to address this situation. But if things do not change substantially, it will be necessary to act within the framework of the United Nations in order to safeguard global security from a real threat.

The lesson we must draw from the events of 11 September is that haste can lead to carelessness, but delay in taking the necessary action can have terrible consequences. When terrorist attacks or threats to peace are carried out by networks or regimes that aim at destroying our way of life and our liberal democracies, then democracies have not only the right but also the duty to defend themselves.

Let me now turn our attention to the Middle East. Italy supports the road map drawn up by the European Union, as well as the action of the "quartet" and the rapid convening of an international conference to ensure the peaceful coexistence of two independent States within safe and secure borders.

First of all, the spiral of violence must come to an end through the cessation of terrorist attacks. The holding of free and fair elections will advance the process of democratic reform of the Palestinian National Authority. But a lasting peace cannot be envisaged unless we narrow the economic gap between the Israelis and the Palestinians, giving the Palestinians realistic hope for jobs and development. With this goal in mind, Italy has presented a plan to rebuild and support the Palestinian economy. Italy has already offered to host the negotiations and the peace conference.

We are men and women of peace. We are convinced that this new century cannot be left at the mercy of criminal folly and fanaticism. We are committed to the fight against terrorism, and we will do everything in our power to eradicate that evil and to defend our security and our future. We will lend our efforts to the building of a true and just peace, the only kind of peace for the just and the free.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Italian Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

Mr. Downer (Australia): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. I am also pleased to welcome Switzerland as a new Member of the United Nations.

Let me acknowledge also two other significant developments: the establishment of the African Union, and the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Both raise real hope for a new era of political stability and economic growth for Africa.

We meet at this General Assembly in the shadow of the terrorist attacks on this great city one year ago. Those chilling events were an attack on the values of the great civilizations represented here today, values that are central to the United Nations Charter and this Organization.

We can take some comfort in knowing that the international community has responded, deliberately and resolutely, to international terrorism. The coalition in the war against terrorism — led by the United States and joined by others, including Australia — has accomplished a great deal. The Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan has been disabled. The Taliban regime has been defeated. Now the world is a safer and more humane place.

But terrorism cannot be stamped out by military effort alone. Together we must choke off support — financial and otherwise — for terrorism. We must stop the patrons and bankrollers of the trade in terror, and together face this insidious threat. The decisive response of the United Nations after 11 September, embodied in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), created a framework for Member States to join forces in suppressing, prosecuting and punishing terrorist acts and terrorist financing.

All Member States must implement the commitments made in resolution 1373 (2001). Australia has strengthened its counter-terrorism legislative and law enforcement framework. We are party to 10 of the 12 anti-terrorism instruments and will ratify another later this month. Australia is also assisting other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to implement their obligations.

We face another grave threat to international peace and security, one that tests the very authority of the United Nations. For over a decade, Iraq has flouted legally binding obligations to disclose and eradicate its programmes for weapons of mass destruction. Iraq has defied United Nations resolutions, United Nations inspections and United Nations sanctions, and it has ignored some 23 of the 27 United Nations obligations imposed on it under 16 Security Council resolutions. The Secretary-General has been patient, flexible and assiduous in his efforts to get Iraq to comply with Council resolutions. But Iraq has refused to work with the United Nations in efforts to dismantle its programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

Until this occurs, Iraq is a grave threat to its neighbours and to the world. Iraq's well documented aggression towards its neighbours and its past use of chemical weapons underline the potency of the threat it poses. Grave concerns remain about Iraq's present capabilities.

Up until 1998 United Nations weapons inspectors did much good work in finding and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program. But the work of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was never finished, because in 1998 the inspectors were effectively thrown out of Iraq. Four years later, there is little doubt that Iraq has been working hard to rebuild its chemical and biological weapons programmes. Moreover, serious questions also remain about Iraq's nuclear weapons programme.

This state of affairs cannot be left unresolved. Iraq must give immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to inspectors to all areas, facilities, equipment, records and Iraqi officials. In short, Iraq must fulfil the requirements of all relevant Security Council resolutions. If Iraq has nothing to hide, then it has nothing to fear. Indeed, by meeting these demands, Iraq and its people have everything to gain.

Let us also be very clear: Iraq's flagrant and persistent defiance is a direct challenge to the United Nations, to the authority of the Security Council, to international law, and to the will of the international community.

We cannot stand by and allow ourselves to be ignored. Nor must protracted negotiations be allowed to weaken and eventually paralyse efforts to allay fears about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. We all must demonstrate a clear, collective determination to uphold the authority of the Security Council, and to ensure that its resolutions on Iraq are implemented in full. Otherwise, if Iraq's pursuit of these abhorrent weapons is allowed to continue, we may shortly be asking ourselves why we failed to act.

The terrorist threat has given new urgency to our disarmament and non-proliferation goals, and puts demands on us for a renewed effort to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction — both to non-state

and state actors. We have to be alive to the willingness of terrorist groups to develop and use chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

Australia, for its part, intends to pursue practical and effective measures through international non-proliferation treaty regimes and export-control arrangements. These regimes and arrangements have delivered tangible security benefits, and should be supported strongly.

We also need to deal with other transnational challenges: not just terrorism but other transnational crimes, including the smuggling of arms, drugs and people.

Transnational crimes threaten all countries. They require us to cooperate further in law enforcement, intelligence and financial controls — much like the war on terrorism.

People-smuggling and trafficking, in particular, are a truly transnational problem. This lucrative criminal enterprise undermines the international refugee protection system, and legal migration programs, that have enabled millions to build new and prosperous lives in countries like Australia. Combating people-smuggling and trafficking in persons is particularly important to Australia and to the Asia-Pacific region. This year, Australia co-hosted a regional ministerial conference with Indonesia. Ministers from thirty-eight countries committed themselves to stopping the people who deal cold-heartedly in human cargo. We agreed that, in the first instance, people-smuggling must be legislated against as a serious crime. There is much more we need to do, and Australia welcomes international discussion and action on the issue, including within the United Nations system itself.

Australia welcomes the addition of the International Criminal Court to the international legal framework. It is an example of positive international cooperation which will complement the efforts of States to end impunity for the worst violations of international humanitarian law.

United Nations work in East Timor is another outstanding example of how the organization can, and does, make a difference — in this case in response to a humanitarian crisis. In May we celebrated East Timor's independence. We are now about to welcome East Timor as a new member of the United Nations. That we have arrived at this point owes much to the resolve and courage of the East Timorese. It owes much also to the United Nations and United Nations authorized missions that brought stability and order and renewed hope for the future.

I congratulate the Secretary-General and the Security Council for providing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) with the necessary support, not just for peacekeeping and policing, but also for developing stable governance in East Timor. Sustained United Nations and international support will be critical in East Timor's formative years. Australia is determined to provide such support. I would like to pay tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello's efforts in East Timor, and to congratulate him warmly on his appointment as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

HIV/AIDS is a global issue that tears at the fabric of our society, and threatens the economic development of entire continents. The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in June last year brought home to Member States their responsibilities to marshal national and regional responses to HIV/AIDS. Australia hosted a regional ministerial meeting in Melbourne in October 2001. Ministers agreed on the need to develop strategies to fight HIV/AIDS, and on the need to share lessons and cooperate in priority areas. We helped establish the Asia-Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development to engender greater cooperation in the region, and we applaud the appointment of a United Nations regional envoy for HIV/AIDS.

The United Nations has a heavy agenda. But it cannot — and should not — try to do everything. To make a difference it must be selective and focused, matching its activities to its capabilities and to the priorities that we, the Member States, set for it. The Millennium Declaration gave us clear, agreed priorities. And the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference and the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development have built on these, giving us a framework to shape and direct our work. We also need to revitalize and reform the way in which the key organs of the Organization — the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council — function. The Security Council, in particular, should be reformed, including by expanding its membership.

We also need to think again about the relationship between these organs and the Secretariat: time is not a free good, nor are meeting services, nor are the Secretary-General's reports, and nor is the capacity or will of Member States to provide resources without limits. We need to look at how we can more effectively use existing Unite Nations mechanisms — particularly the General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) — as bodies of review. And we are especially concerned that major United Nations conferences have become so large and unwieldy that their fundamental purposes have been obscured.

Australia strongly supports the process of reform proposed by the Secretary-General for his second term. This provides a unique opportunity to address these questions and to "re-tool" the Organization so as to build on its strengths. As Member States, we are the United Nations. The Organization is there to serve our collective interests.

In order to address new threats and challenges, the United Nations must be focused and responsive, and its key organs must function efficiently and effectively. We must continue to work together to enable it to meet our expectations. I am confident that — together — we can achieve success.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, the Federal Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland.

Mr. Deiss (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): It is imperative, now more than ever before, that all the peoples of the world act in a spirit of solidarity. The United Nations embodies this spirit. In joining the United Nations, Switzerland sends you a message of solidarity. This makes me proud and happy.

I would like to add my thanks to those expressed last Tuesday by Kaspar Villiger, the President of the Swiss Confederation, on the occasion of Switzerland's formal admission to the United Nations. I would also like to thank all the Members of the United Nations for the warm welcome they have given my country. Switzerland feels welcomed. We feel that we are where we belong.

I would also like to give Secretary-General Kofi Annan my profound thanks. His sincerity and wisdom contributed greatly to convincing the people of Switzerland of the need to join the United Nations.

I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. I already know and value your qualities and talents and I know that you will put them to the best service of the United Nations. Switzerland is pleased to be working with you towards the success of this session of the General Assembly.

The Swiss people have decided to join the United Nations. They have said "yes" to increased cooperation with the United Nations. They have said "yes" to a stronger international commitment. They have said "yes" to taking greater responsibility for meeting the challenges that face humankind.

The challenges facing the international community at the beginning of the twenty-first century are immense. A number of regions suffer from terrible poverty. Crises and wars are rife on all continents. There are millions of refugees. We see the hideous face of terrorism. Criminal networks exploit human beings and traffic shamefully in drugs and arms. New diseases are emerging and, day after day, we continue to destroy the Earth's ecological balance.

There are no simple answers to any of these problems, but there is a place where we can all meet to find solutions: the United Nations. The world needs a strong United Nations, as it is the only universal Organization working at the global level. It alone can analyse problems at the world level. It alone can create a consensus between States on common goals. Finally, as stressed by the Secretary-General, there is no substitute for the unique international legitimacy provided to principles and choices of action by the United Nations.

Switzerland has joined the United Nations as a neutral country and we intend to remain neutral. Our neutral status, however, in no way diminishes our desire for cooperation. On the contrary, it is an advantage for our peace activities. Our membership of the United Nations is not a change in direction, but the logical consequence of our foreign policy.

To quote our Constitution, "the Swiss Confederation is committed ... to a just and peaceful international order". The principal aim of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. For us, therefore, the United Nations is the ideal place to carry out this vital mission. As a Member of the United Nations, Switzerland will devote itself resolutely to international peace and security. That commitment will be focused, above all, on armed

conflicts. The logic of armed conflicts today forces us to adopt a multidimensional approach to peace processes. If we are to succeed, we must work in several different areas in parallel: military, diplomatic, humanitarian and economic. We must also involve all interested players in the process. All this demands a major effort of coordination, and Switzerland will contribute to that.

Security problems, moreover, must be addressed from a broader angle — that of human security. The inhabitants of this world must be able to live without fear of war, starvation and despotism. In particular, we must protect vulnerable individuals and groups. Switzerland will therefore pursue its efforts in favour of human security. This includes stopping the recruitment of child soldiers, eliminating anti-personnel mines and halting the proliferation of small arms.

In this context, I welcome the Secretary-General's appeal to make full use of multilateral institutions. This is especially valid for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is only one source of legitimacy for the use of force: the United Nations.

Iraq has been discussed on several occasions during these past days. There is undeniably a need to act, and to act with determination, in order to ensure the implementation of United Nations resolutions, but action must be taken together, within the United Nations. Only the United Nations can confer international legitimacy to any action against Iraq.

Switzerland is convinced that peace and development can be sustained only if they go hand in hand with freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. Human dignity is our most precious asset. It must be defended at all times and in all places. We will champion this conviction at the United Nations to the full and without concessions. For as long as men and women are exploited, children are mistreated and the death penalty is carried out, Switzerland will do everything within its power to defend human dignity.

At the General Assembly this year, we will strive in particular to promote the adoption of the draft optional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. This protocol is needed to give better protection to people in detention against torture and mistreatment. That is why we have been supporting this initiative for years.

In its capacity as the Depositary State, Switzerland feels a special responsibility to promote awareness of and respect for the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. At the United Nations, we will continue tirelessly to defend these instruments. In this area, Switzerland has submitted to a number of countries involved in the Middle East conflict a proposal which aims to ensure the better implementation of international humanitarian law. We advocate two mechanisms: one for promoting dialogue to allow the parties to settle problems concerning the application of international humanitarian law; the second, a mechanism to monitor respect for humanitarian law.

We are also convinced that the International Criminal Court will ensure the better application of international humanitarian law. This new Court is an essential tool for dealing with serious violations of the fundamental human freedoms. We will therefore remain on our guard to ensure that it can function efficiently and we will pursue our efforts to convince those States that have not yet signed the Rome Statute of the need for such a Court.

Two days ago, we commemorated the tragic events that shook the United States and the world one year ago. The causes of terrorism must be eradicated. I am thinking, inter alia, of injustice, disregard for the rights of minorities, and poverty. That is one of the objectives of our development cooperation and of our human rights policy.

Sustainable development and the elimination of poverty remain mankind's main challenges today. We saw that again at Johannesburg. They are global challenges that require a global strategy and global solidarity. In other words, they require coordinated action by the United Nations institutions, as well as greater cooperation between the United Nations, the development banks, civil society and the private sector. Development cooperation must be coordinated. Switzerland will contribute to strengthening the coordination efforts vital to ensuring that our activities enjoy the success they merit.

The struggle against poverty also requires greater exchange of expertise and better transfer of technology. Switzerland is closely involved in the preparation of the World Summit on the Information Society, the first

phase of which will take place in Geneva in 2003. The main challenge of that Summit is the very gap between North and South in terms of access to new information technologies. Therefore, I call on all to contribute actively to the success of that conference.

These thoughts lead me to refer to Geneva, the international city that is a close and longstanding link between my country and the United Nations. Switzerland is proud and grateful to be able to host the European Headquarters of the United Nations and many specialized agencies. Geneva is the main international hub of disarmament, humanitarian aid, social development, the promotion of human rights and environmental protection. That gives me great pleasure, because Swiss citizens are particularly concerned about these issues. However, that also involves the special responsibility of offering international organizations optimum working and living conditions. You can also count on Switzerland in that area.

Before Switzerland became a Member, the United Nations was already a universal Organization, but with Switzerland — and soon Timor-Leste — the United Nations will be even more universal. The United Nations is the greatest world forum. Switzerland will provide it its full support in the interests of humanity and the interests of we, the peoples of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.